



## Hoping to Keep the Fight Alive

*By Shailagh Murray*  
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Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-Ill.) started pressing for greater congressional scrutiny of private contractors in

The House on Thursday overwhelmingly passed legislation to hold firms such as Blackwater USA accou

The 389 to 30 vote came despite White House opposition and amid rising alarm in Congress about pote

Schakowsky saw the potential for scandal long ago. In April 2006, she wrote a letter to President Bush a

"Finally it's really broken through," Schakowsky said of the expanding role of contractors. "And I think on

Also, she said, the public is learning how far the U.S. role in Iraq extends beyond the 160,000-troop pres

"We don't look at the number of contractors who are engaged in military activities, we don't count the de

Now she wants to go further and is drafting legislation to phase out the use of private contractors for mil

"The government has to have a monopoly on the use of force," she continued. "We have outsourced wa

Placing further restraints on private security firms is just one of the Iraq-related measures that Schakowsky

"Whether or not the Senate has the votes, whether or not the president signs a bill, we have got to make

Schakowsky was among the few Democrats who didn't cower when Appropriations Committee Chairma

She compared the idea to a proposal by the Ways and Means committee chairman, Charles B. Rangel (

"If there were real skin in the game, I think even more so with the draft, then this war will be over," Schal

She pointed to the Washington Post-ABC News poll released last week showing that Americans overwh

At the same time, the poll found no consensus about the pace of a withdrawal from Iraq. Fifty-two perce

"We need to assure the American people that this really can be done," she said. "I think right now, they c

And so the House must keep legislating. "I want to see the Democrats in the House put up the fight," Sc

"We make it clear to all the war opponents that we're really fighting, we separate ourselves from the Rep